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STATE for R (KHUGHES and DPOWELL), NEA/PPD, NEA/ARPI

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SUBJECT: "We Are All in This Together": Solidarity Across Nations, Faiths and Cultures Marks 9/11 in Bahrain

REF: STATE 161551

1. Summary: The Ambassador, in his remarks during a commemoration of September 11, honored the victims of many nations and faiths who have perished in terrorist attacks. Ambassadors of the United Kingdom and Egypt joined the Ambassador in calling for a united stand against the borderless threat of terrorism and highlighted globally-held values of tolerance and peace. The event, held at the Ambassador's residence on September 11, drew a large and diverse audience of Bahraini politicians, civil society leaders, clerics, diplomatic corps, and artists. A Bahraini poet read his poem about his personal anguish at the 9/11 attacks, followed by an American Fulbright Scholar who read a selection from Walt Whitman. The event, rich in cross-cultural, interfaith and artistic expression, was blanketed by the print media, and also well attended by leading columnists and opinion-makers. U.K. Ambassador Robin Lamb captured the feeling of the moment in his speech, saying "We are all in this together." End Summary.

Setting and Audience

2. The Ambassador hosted a reception at his residence on the evening of September 11, honoring not only the victims of 9/11 but also the many victims of terrorism around the world. In order to emphasize the global aspect of the issue, the Ambassador invited the U.K. and Egyptian Ambassadors to make remarks. The turnout for the commemoration was substantial and rich in opinion-leaders. About 100 people from Bahraini ministries, parliament, diplomatic corps, business community, society and culture, and journalism attended. Muslim and Christian leaders also attended, including Sayed Dheya al Musawi, a Shia cleric and commentator for the independent daily Al Wasat who recently returned from an International Visitor program on "Interfaith Dialogue." Sayed Dheya helped arrange for an exhibit of six paintings by the Al Eskafi society on the subject of peace, on view during the ceremony. The Ambassador closed the ceremony with a moment of silence in memory of all victims of global terrorism.

A Common Humanity, a Common Enemy

3. The Ambassador (complete remarks are included below) described the September 11 attacks in a global context, saying that although the attacks took place on American soil, "they in fact left grieving families on virtually every continent." In the four years since those attacks, he noted that terrorists continue to strike worldwide. "The world's nations face a common enemy, an enemy with a deeply flawed vision of the world, a sort of mythology shaped by their hatred." He called on all countries to stand together and to further isolate extremists, and to work together to show the world our common values of tolerance, peace, understanding, and compassion.

4. Ambassador described the recent outpouring of sympathy and assistance following Hurricane Katrina as reminiscent of the international response four years ago. "We remember the world's response, and the resolve to confront the threat of global terrorism together. We stand together bound by our common humanity."

5. In noting the international impact of terrorism, Ambassador and others described an enemy that has isolated itself through its philosophy of fear and hatred. Terrorist attempts to divide the world and bring on a clash of civilizations have instead produced greater solidarity in facing a common enemy. U.K. Ambassador Robin Lamb echoed the sentiment in describing the aftermath of attacks on the London Underground. Like September 11, the London bombings struck down not just British citizens, but innocent victims from many nations.

6. In his remarks, Egyptian Ambassador Dr. Azmy Khalifa put the July bombings of Sharm-el-Shaikh in the same context,

saying "Terrorism is becoming an international phenomenon. This phenomenon cannot be remedied unless we have international cooperation to establish a general strategy."

Shared values Through Culture

17. Following the Ambassador's remarks, Bahraini poet and journalist Hisham Al-Sakin read his poem "To All Those Innocent People," which described his own anguish at the human cost of 9/11 and prospects for peace in the world ("Pity how the angels lost count/Their prayers for those innocent men and women/How painfully sad were those scenes, those sounds/Terrifying how evil sings its own treacherous sermon.") He prefaced his poem by describing the United States as a "peace-loving people and a great nation."

18. Dr. Philip Tabakow, a recently arrived Fulbright Scholar, read a selection from Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd," written at the time of President Lincoln's death at the hand of an assassin. Tabakow ended with a powerful crescendo on "Mighty Manhattan, with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides."

Extensive Press Coverage

19. The 9/11 commemoration was covered extensively in the print media, on front pages in both Arabic and English dailies, with the exception of Akhbar Al Khaliij, the pro-government but typically anti-American tabloid, who were invited but did not show up.

110. Government-owned progressive daily Al Ayam had the most coverage, also carrying an interview with guest Hassan Al-Ansari, the Bahraini envoy to Iraq who was wounded in Baghdad in a July assassination attempt. He described the attempt on his life as a criminal act targeting the Bahraini role in helping to achieve peace in Iraq.

111. Also in Al Ayam, Bahraini MP and chair of the Defense and National Security Committee Ahmed Behzad, noted that anti-terrorism legislation prepared by his committee will be submitted in the next session of parliament. MP Fareed Ghazi called for more convictions of terrorists "targeting innocents all over the world." Shura Council member Mansour Al Arrayedh told EmbOff privately that the Ambassador's comments would help facilitate passage of counter-terrorism legislation currently with the parliament, and he requested a copy of the speech to share with his colleagues.

112. Arabic daily Al Meethaq interviewed Iraqi Ambassador Ghassan Hussain, who said terrorists are using Islam as a cover for criminal acts, and the Turkish Ambassador Hilal Baskal, who said each act of terrorism is "targeting the whole world."

113. Begin Ambassador's remarks in full:

--Thank you for joining us here tonight as we mark the fourth anniversary of that terrible day in September 2001 when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, killing almost 3,000 innocent people. Although these attacks took place on American soil, and were aimed at American institutions, they in fact left grieving families on virtually every continent. Citizens from dozens of nations were killed on September 11. Innocent men and women and children of every race and religion died that day.

--September 11 is a day of remembrance in the United States. The families of the victims remain in the thoughts and prayers of the American people. We recall the good lives that ended too soon, the courage of rescuers who saw death and did not flee, and families left behind to carry a burden of sorrow with the courage and strength they have shown. And as we struggle today in the shadow of another disaster, the destructive force of Hurricane Katrina, we reflect on what was lost four years ago.

--But we in America are not only marking this day by remembering the many victims of September 11. We are also honoring all of the people from many different countries and faiths who have been killed by terrorists. In the four years since the September 11 attacks, the terrorists have continued to kill -- in Madrid and Istanbul and Jakarta and Casablanca, in Baghdad, in London, in Beslan, in Riyadh, in Bali, in Sharm-el-Shaikh, and elsewhere.

--We in the United States were heartened by the outpouring of sympathy and support we received from around the world following the attacks of September 11. We remember the world's response, and the resolve to confront the threat of global terrorism together. We stand together bound by our common humanity.

--In dealing with the scourge of terrorism, the world's nations face a common enemy, an enemy with a deeply flawed vision of the world, a sort of mythology shaped by their hatred. They believe that if they continue these vicious attacks, they will provoke a clash of civilizations, and somehow emerge triumphant. But they have shown

themselves to be simply extremists capable of heinous crimes against innocent people. Contrary to their attempts to divide us, the world has responded in solidarity against this threat. We as global partners have shown that we share values of tolerance and peace, respect and understanding, compassion and caring.

--And as we gather today, that is the message that I would like to leave with you -- that we can and must further isolate the extremists and unite the world community by highlighting our common values of tolerance, respect and understanding, and standing together against terror. It is vitally important that we all work together in this spirit. This gathering tonight -- including our Bahrain friends, colleagues from the diplomatic corps, and American citizens residing here in Bahrain -- reflects this common spirit.

--Finally, I want to take a moment to express, on behalf of the American people and government, our deep-felt appreciation for the support and sympathy we have received in the aftermath of one of worst natural disasters in our country's history -- Hurricane Katrina. I want to express again our thanks to the Government of Bahrain for its assistance of \$ 5 million. In this time of struggle for the American people, as in the aftermath of 9/11, the outpouring of compassion and support has been extraordinary, and the American people are truly heartened to know that they are not struggling alone. End Remarks.

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